



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Thanksgiving
November 24, 2016

BE THANKFUL

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This is the season that I reflect on guidelines for giving thanks, and reflecting on past commentaries. I confess that in the past far too often I have dwelt on the sin of ingratitude, pointing out how much we take for granted and how seldom we are really thankful for what we have or for what God has done for us.

But genuine thanksgiving is far more than the absence of ingratitude. It is the attitude of your heart, which eventually becomes a lifestyle. True, our generation has focused on what it wants, believing that more is always better, and regardless of how much we have accumulated or how much we have, we are never completely satisfied as long as someone has more.

Perhaps the fallacy lies in our thinking that associates happiness with what we have, while millions who have far less have learned the lesson of being joyful, recognizing that the source of their happiness is within, not in the accumulation of things.

Vast numbers of people the world over seem to be overwhelmed by life. Pessimism is in; optimism is out. The hope for tomorrow has been challenged by the grim realities of life today. It's the economy, the reality that you will never fill your tank with gasoline at the same price you did this time last year or possibly even last month, and the reality that if there is life on other planets, they must be using earth for their insane asylum.

The issue is that you are either overwhelmed by the negative aspects of life or learn to focus on the reality that there is far more to life than simply earning a living—and by God's grace set your sights on the reality of heaven and the realization that for God's children, life as we know it *now* is the worst we will ever have it.

Question: Have you ever gotten to the place in life where you learn to live above the circumstances? Living above the circumstances is not a concession to defeat or enjoying nothing in life, but it is an understanding that God is the strength of your life, and His joy within fills your life with purpose and meaning. In the King James text of Psalm 107 is a refrain which runs throughout that chapter: "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, for His wonderful works to the children of men."

Frankly, some of the people in the world whom I have met who seem to be the happiest are the ones who have the least when it comes to material possessions; and inversely, some of the ones who have the most are the unhappiest. And I freely admit there are exceptions to this observation, yet—and it is important that you grasp this—regardless of what people have or do not have, the ones who are at peace with themselves and their lot are the ones who have established a relationship with God, whose parameters are gratitude and thanksgiving. Within those boundaries is an understanding that God is a good God and that He is the real source of our hope and strength.

Gratitude and thanksgiving are self-generating attitudes which create an outflowing of wellbeing and praise to the Almighty.

Question: On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your sense of gratitude to God, to your family and to others? Paul put it like this: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

May God help us to learn to sow the seed of gratitude that we may reap the fruit of joyfulness and well-being.
Resource reading: 1 Thessalonians 5